

# NUTRITION & HIV/AIDS

Eating healthy is important for all people regardless of their HIV status. However, when you are living with HIV, good nutrition is even more important than ever because the condition, as well as some of the medications used in treating it, has been known to change the way in which the body processes nutrients. Here are some nutrition tips for those with HIV to support their overall health and maintain the immune system.

## Eating a balanced diet

A healthy, balanced diet is one that contains food from all the basic food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy.

- Eat grains/starches with every meal.
- Eat poultry, fish and vegetarian proteins (e.g. legumes) regularly.
- Eat vegetables and fruit every day.
- Choose foods low in saturated fat (which is found in animal products such as red meat and full-fat dairy), sodium (salt), and added sugars.



## Drinking enough liquids

- Drink plenty of clean and safe water. Try other fluids like teas, flavored waters, coffee, seltzer, or fruit juice mixed with water.
- Alcohol consumption should be in moderation — up to 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men.
- If you have diarrhea or are vomiting, you will need to drink more liquids than usual.



## Focusing on food safety

Paying attention to food and water safety is important when you have HIV, because your immune system is already weakened and working hard to fight off infections. If you have HIV, follow these food safety guidelines:

- **Clean:** Wash your hands, cooking utensils, and countertops often when preparing foods.
- **Separate:** Separate foods to prevent the spread of any germs from one food to another. For example, keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from foods that are ready to eat, including fruits, vegetables, and breads.
- **Thaw:** Thaw frozen meats and other frozen foods in the refrigerator or in a microwave.
- **Cook:** Use a food thermometer to make sure that meat reaches 165 to 212 degrees F.
- **Chill:** Refrigerate (below 40 degrees F) or freeze (0 degrees F) meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, or other foods that are likely to spoil within a couple hours.
- **Do not eat:** raw or undercooked eggs, sushi, raw or undercooked poultry, meat, and seafood, unpasteurized milk or dairy products, or sprouts.

# EASING HIV SIDE EFFECTS WITH FOODS

## Nausea and Vomiting

- Choose plain or mild foods low in fat.
- Try some foods or fluids with ginger – in tea, ginger ale, or ginger snaps.
- Don't drink liquids at the same time you eat your meals.
- Rest between meals, but don't lie flat.
- Eat small meals every 1 to 2 hours.
- Avoid:
  - ⇒ Fatty, greasy, or fried foods
  - ⇒ Hot foods
  - ⇒ Very sweet or spicy foods
  - ⇒ Foods with strong odors



## Diarrhea

- Keep your body hydrated with extra fluids like water, seltzer, or tea.
- Try cooked or canned vegetables instead of raw vegetables.
- Try the BRAT Diet (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, and Toast).
- Eat small meals/snacks every 1 to 2 hours.
- Limit sodas and other sugary drinks.
- Avoid greasy and spicy foods.
- Avoid milk and other dairy products.



## Mouth & Swallowing Problems

- Try eating cooked vegetables and soft fruits (like bananas and pears).
- Try soft foods like mashed potatoes, yogurt, and oatmeal.
- Also try scrambled eggs, cottage cheese, macaroni and cheese, and canned fruits.
- Rinse your mouth with water. This can moisten your mouth, remove bits of food, and make food taste better to you.
- Avoid:
  - ⇒ Hard or crunchy foods such as raw vegetables
  - ⇒ Very hot foods and beverages
  - ⇒ Spicy foods
  - ⇒ Acidic foods such as oranges, grapefruit, and tomatoes

## Loss of Appetite

- Try smaller, more frequent meals.
- Try a little exercise, like walking or yoga. This can often stimulate your appetite and make you feel like eating more.
- Eat whenever your appetite is good.
- Avoid drinking too much right before or during meals. This can make you feel full.
- Avoid carbonated (fizzy) drinks and foods such as cabbage, broccoli, and beans – they can create gas in your stomach and make you feel full and bloated.
- Eat with your family or friends.
- Choose your favorite foods, and make meals as attractive to you as possible.

